DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 087 HE 014 113

AUTHOR Lueck, Lowell A.
TITLE An Approach to Long-Range Planning in the 1980's. AIR Forum 1981 Paper.
PUB DATE May 81
NOTE 16p.: Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (21st, Minneapolis, MN, May 17-20, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accreditation (Institutions): Campus Planning: *College Planning: *College Role: Coordination: Departments: *Educational Finance: Educational Objectives: Higher Education: *Institutional Research: *Long Range Planning: Models: Program Evaluation: Self Evaluation (Groups): *State Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *AIR Forum

ABSTRACT

Key ingredients of long-range planning described in the literature during the last 10 years, the role of an office of institutional research, and a coordinated long-range planning process as it might occur in a public four-year college or university are described. A successful long-range planning process is characterized by centralized coordination of planning, involvement of the chief executive, use of a planning council, and decentralized planning. The data generated by an institutional research office for program reviews, accreditation self-studies, and similar efforts can be applied to the planning process. Self-studies can be used to develop new or revised goals and objectives and the means to achieve them, and institutional researchers can analyze data and forecast future conditions. Four planning models are cited, including Parekh's (1975) planning kit, which outlines the process through a series of matrices, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (1978) planning manual. The next stage of the planning process is to develop a mission statement or revise the existing statement if necessary. The economy, energy costs, and demographics are among the factors that affect college planning. The relationship between the institutional mission and the goals of each academic department and academic support unit needs to be evaluated, and considered in relation to the final college plan. The importance of integrating academic, financial, and physical planning is emphasized. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED205087

13

AN APPROACH TO LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN THE 1980'S

Lowell A. Lueck, Assistant Director
Institutional Research and Planning
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455
(309) 298-1185

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Association for Institutional Research

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

NE 014 113

Paper presented at the annual forum of the Association for Institutional Research, May 1981

THE ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

This paper was presented at the Twenty-First Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 17-20, 1981. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Mary Corcoran
University of Minnesota
(Editor, AIR Forum Publications)

ABSTRACT

This paper presents some of the common ingredients of long-range planning described in the literature during the last ten years or so. The role of an office of institutional research is discussed and references to various planning documents are included for institutions interested in developing a comprehensive planning process. A brief description of a coordinated long-range planning process as it might occur in a public four-year institution is presented, and the importance of integrating academic, financial, and physical planning is stressed.

AN APPROACH TO LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN THE 1980'S

Most higher education administrators have much more experience in managing institutions during periods of growth than during periods of decline. The declining population of 18 to 24 year-olds and the recession in the economy facing higher education in the 1980's could present a sobering scenario to the forward-looking administrator. The reactive style of administration practiced by many in the last two decades may need to be replaced by a proactive stance that relies on a comprehensive long-range plan. Even when plans have been written in the past they have often been only descriptive essays of the status quo or dream lists of the future rather than realistic planning documents.

Planning, if approached in the right way, should provide information that identifies the strengths and limitations of the institution and should provide a framework for developing a blueprint or alternative blueprints for the future. In addition, an institutional plan may relieve some of the pressures for planning that may be imposed by state coordinating boards, governing boards and accrediting associations. An internally developed process may also be more acceptable to faculty and staff than one thrust on them from an outside agency.

Review of the Literature

Anyone who attempts to start a long-range planning process, or improve on an existing one, will soon discover the abundance of materials published during the last ten years. The problem is to distill from this wealth of material the parts that can be adapted to an individual institution. Some of the common ingredients of long-range plans, most often called strategic plans in business and industry, will be described in the next few paragraphs.

A recent study by Boxx and Johnson (1980) found that many institutions do not engage in thorough comprehensive long-range planning. Planning is often done only on an irregular basis and the plans that are produced are not communicated to the constituencies. A study of public four-year institutions with enrollments of 15,000 students or more was reported by Salloway and Tack (1978) and found that these institutions often had no central coordination of academic, administrative, financial and other areas of planning. A similar need to integrate these aspects of planning was expressed by Haas (1976). Thus, a need for centralized coordination seems to be one of the first ingredients of a successful planning effort. The coordinative role of the chief planner has been pointed out by many writers in recent years (Gaither, 1977; Kieft, Armijo, and Bucklew, 1978; Lasher, 1978; Salloway and Tack, 1978).

The centralized planning unit (coordinator) does not do the actual planning; rather its role is to develop the tools used in planning, act as a catalyst to see that the planning gets done and to review the planning process to see that the planning is done well. Haas (1978) sees this last function as one of quality control.

Who should be the chief planner? The involvement of the chief executive officer in the planning process has been discussed by several authors, including Salloway and Tack (1978), who reported that often the authority for the administration and coordination of the plan was delegated to a planning officer. In most cases this should be someone who reports directly to the chief executive. The importance of involving the chief executive cannot be overstated. "The president leads the others and sets the framework in which planning takes place" (Boxx and Johnson, 1980, p. 37). Involvement of those units reporting to the chief executive is also important, although the very fact that the top administrator is involved and interested in planning should generate a similar response at the next level.

The need to decentralize the planning process has been expressed by several writers (Brown, 1974; Gaither, 1977; Hansen, 1979). Flaig (1979) stressed the need to involve people at every level in order to get their commitment to the plan that evolves. The role of the individual faculty member has been described in detail by Brown (1974) who started with the premise that planning must involve the faculty rather than being done for them. Andrew (1979) stressed that "faculty are needed . . . for their expertise in the subject area and their insights on current and developing needs" (p. 28).

At most institutions a council on planning or similar group would be used to develop planning procedures and guidelines (Gaither, 1979). Broad participation in the planning process can be encouraged by including representatives from the faculty, administration, staff, students, alumni and the community. It would be the responsibility of this group to review the mission statement of the institution and to recommend short- and long-range goals and objectives for the institution. This group could also develop a planning guide (Gaither, 1977; Anderson and Adams, 1978) to set a common framework for all constituencies and would provide definitions of terms, a calendar, and a planning questionnaire or other forms to provide some commonality to the plans developed by each planning unit.

The role of an office of institutional research is another important ingredient in a successful plan. This is the one office that should have the historical data needed to provide the base for the remainder of the planning process. The data generated by an institutional research office for program reviews, accreditation self-studies and similar efforts can be applied to the planning process. In fact, Kells (1980) has suggested that self-study should be the forerunner and foundation of long-range planning. Since self-studies identify strengths and weaknesses of programs and activities within the

institution, they can be used to develop new or revised goals and objectives and the means to achieve them.

The office of institutional research can also analyze data and present forecasts of conditions in the future. The analysis of data about external conditions such as the economy, society as a whole and other factors is another area where institutional research offices can be useful in the planning process. The use of simulation models is also suggested by many as an area of expertise that can be provided by institutional researchers.

Other Considerations

Some other ingredients of a successful planning effort have been suggested by various authors. Several have mentioned the need to be flexible (Flaig, 1979; Poland and Arns, 1978). For some this means the ability to change or modify plans on a regular basis while others such as Brown (1974) have suggested the use of a loose-leaf notebook so the plan itself can be changed by removing an outdated page and inserting a new one.

The number of years to be covered by a long-range plan has been set down by various writers in a wide range from two or three years to fifteen years. Flaig (1979) has suggested that a five-year plan may be as far into the future as programs and activities can realistically be projected. A ten or fifteen year plan would probably be useful only in terms of long-range goals and objectives.

Some Planning Models

Various models for university planning have been published in recent years. One of the most extensive guides to the process was developed by Parekh (1975) and published by Change Magazine Press. This planning "kit" outlines the process through a series of matrices and is designed to move the

process from the plan to implementation. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (1978) has also produced a fairly extensive manual for planning that uses matrices and a ten-stage planning process. This is a futurist approach to planning.

Descriptions of planning at the institutional level can be found in a publication by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) (Kieft, 1978) which provides a description of planning at four different institutions. These case studies provide considerable detail on the actual planning process at each institution. Public and private four-year colleges, a public two-year and a large university are included.

Anderson and Adams (1978) have described a public university model at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh, while Hansen (1979) has provided a case study of the process at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Gaither (1977) has described the planning activities at DePaul University and included a calendar of events and an abstract of steps in the long-range planning process.

A Model Long-Range Planning Process

Assuming the administrative framework has been set up to coordinate the comprehensive long-range planning process as described in the previous sections, the planning can proceed by developing a mission statement or revising the existing statement if necessary. The mission has to be defined to the satisfaction of the board, the institution and it constituents. Anderson and Adams (1978) pointed out the "mission statements set the parameters for effective planning" (p. 327). Once the mission statement is agreed upon, planning assumptions can be developed.

Planning assumptions, in a sense, set the stage for the remainder of the planning process. There are many factors that impinge on the operation of the

institution that cannot be ignored when developing the plan. For example, the economy, energy costs, collective bargaining, demographics and federal aid to education can all have significant effects on the costs of educating students, and the number of students enrolling in higher education institutions. Based on these factors an assumption might be made that enrollment in a specific institution may increase by five percent per year for the first three years of the decade of the 1980's and then drop by a similar amount for the remainder of the decade until a 20 percent decrease in overall enrollment is reached in 1990.

Once the planning assumptions are developed, institutional goals can be generated. Goals, as defined by Peterson (1970), "refer to the particular, possibly unique pattern of specified ends, outputs, and priorities established for a single college or university" (p. 3). University goals usually revolve around teaching, research and public service activities. Examples of goals might include: (1) Promote and maintain standards of excellence; and (2) Develop a financial plan that considers all resources available to the institution.

After the goals have been established, objectives to achieve these goals should then be enumerated. Peterson (1970) uses "the word objective in speaking about the ends of various component units, programs, and services" (p. 3). These objectives provide a way to measure progress toward achieving the goals since, in most instances, they will be measureable.

A planning questionnaire can be used to focus on the relationship between the institutional mission and goals, and the goals and objectives of the planning units.[1] Each academic department and academic support unit could be considered a planning unit. The planning questionnaire in the academic units would be accompanied by a variety of historical data from the previous three

to five years, as well as projections for the five years covered by the plan. The office of institutional research would usually provide such data as program majors, degrees conferred, student credit hour production, and resource requirements.

Using the data supplied by the institutional research office, each planning unit responds to the items on the questionnaire and draws up a five-year plan for submission to their dean or comparable administrative unit. Narrative statements are provided, as necessary, to explain or justify the planning components. The plan is developed in conjunction with the budget document and a priority listing of the various components of the programs in the department are presented. These can be based on several different levels of funding (e.g. decreases of 5, 10 or 15 percent) and thus present alternatives for reductions or additions of dollars to the budget.

At the college level the plans of the departments are analyzed and any disagreements between the basic planning unit and the dean are resolved before the final college plan is produced. College priorities are developed and a narrative is written for presentation to the next administrative level. The college plan summarizes the plans of the sub-units and integrates them into a comprehensive plan for the college. This document would then be sent back to the departments for final review and reaction.

In this example, the final college plans would then be forwarded to the academic vice president where the plans for each college would be reviewed and combined into an overall academic plan. Areas of cooperation or conflict between colleges would be resolved in meetings with the deans before the plan would be finalized. The plan would, once again, include a priority listing of programs and activities for the administrative area. New positions, reallocations of existing positions, and similar budgetary decisions need to be

formulated at this point. If the plan is to be successful, the financial resources must be matched to the academic and physical needs of the programs.

A draft of the institutional plan is then developed from plans of the vice presidents and any other units reporting to the chief executive. Once again priorities would be set and concerns resolved through discussion and debate. Copies of the document would then be distributed to the university community and reactions invited through existing committees or other means. Hearings may be held, in some cases, to determine the final priorities to be included in the plan. The plan is then forwarded to the chief executive who may solicit further input, if necessary, before final copies of the plan are distributed.

Other Considerations

Decreases in financial support and enrollments have been faced by many institutions in recent years. An organized approach to long-range planning can help to alleviate some of the problems caused by these decreases. Brown (1970) has suggested a number of guidelines that can be used in evaluating existing programs, as well as ways to eliminate some that do not meet the standards of the institution. A process for reducing the number of faculty positions has been described by Alm, Ehrle, and Webster (1977) based on experiences at Mankato State University between 1970 and 1975.

Approaches to planning that emphasize quality and vitality have been suggested by several writers (Robl, Karman, and Boggs, 1976; Mims, 1980). They describe the use of incentive funding that provides an additional source of funds for new programs or for changes in existing programs. These incentive funds are usually a percentage reallocation of general fund appropriations and are designed to provide funding for promising programs that relate to the mission and scope of the institution.

The final test of the planning process lies in determining if the institution has made progress toward achieving the goals and objectives delineated in the planning process. This evaluation can be handled through program reviews, institutional research studies, and accreditation self-studies.

Kells (1980) has suggested that self-study and planning should be complementary. The planning effort can benefit from the self-study process by using the strengths and weaknesses revealed in the self-analysis to clarify the goals listed in the long-range plan. The programs and related activities of the institution can then be modified as a part of the implementation of the plan. Self-study, planning, and implementation then become major segments of the management of the institution.

Summary and Conclusion

Although no one plan is adaptable to all situations, some general considerations that can be applied to most situations have been presented. Centralized coordination of planning, involvement of the chief executive, use of a planning council, decentralized planning, the role of the office of institutional research, and the use of self-studies have been suggested as key ingredients of a successful long-range planning process. Some planning models found in the literature, and steps in a long-range planning process as it might be carried out in a typical institution, have been described. Reductions in faculty positions and reallocations of resources have also been mentioned as ways to handle declines in enrollment and funding.

The creation of a coordinated long-range planning process can help a higher education institution manage change in the 1980's rather than be managed by change. In other words, long-range planning can help the institution to anticipate changes that may occur so that desired changes may more often be realized.

Footnotes

[1] A copy of the planning questionnaire used at Western Illinois University is available on request from the author.

References

Alm, K. G., & Webster, B. R. Managing faculty reductions. Journal of Higher Education, 1977, 48, 153-163.

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. A futures creating paradigm - a guide to long-range planning - from the future for the future. Washington, D. C.: Resource Center for Planned Change, 1978.

Anderson, T. M., & Adams, W. S. A process for comprehensive institutional planning: a public university model. North Central Association Quarterly, 1978, 53, 327-333.

Andrew, L. D. Involving faculty in planning. Planning for Higher Education, 1979, 7, 27-31.

Boxx, W., & Johnson, T. An examination of formalized planning as currently used in institutions of higher learning. Planning for Higher Education, 1980, 8, 25-39.

Brown, D. G. Criteria for pruning programs. Educational Record, 1970, 51, 405-409.

Brown, D. G. The supreme role of faculty in planning. Why and how? Planning for Higher Education, 1974, 3, n.p.

Flaig, H. The budgetary and planning options for higher education in a period of contraction. Planning for Higher Education, 1979, 8, 20-27.

Gaither, G. The imperative to plan in higher education. North Central Association Quarterly, 1977, 52, 347,355.

Haas, R. M. Integrating academic, fiscal and facilities planning. Planning for Higher Education, 1976, 5, n.p.

Hansen, V. Planning through a decentralized process-case study: University of Wisconsin-Stout. Planning for Higher Education, 1979, 7, 15-18.

Kells, H. R. The purposes and legacy of effective self-study processes: enhancing the study-planning cycle. Journal of Higher Education, 1980, 51, 439-447.

Kieft, R. N. (Ed.). Academic planning: four institutional case studies. Boulder, Colorado: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1978.

Kieft, R. N., Armijo, F., & Bucklew, N. S. A handbook for institutional and program planning: from idea to implementation. Boulder, Colorado: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1978.

Lasher, W. F. The comprehensive institutional planning process and the role of information in it. Planning for Higher Education, 1978, 4, n.p.

Mims, R. S. Resource allocation: stopgap or support for academic planning? New Directions for Institutional Research, 1980, 28, 57-72.

Parekh, S. B. Long-range planning: an institutionwide approach to increasing academic vitality. New Rochelle, N. Y.: Change Magazine Press, 1975.

Peterson, R. The crisis of purpose: definition and uses of institutional goals. Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1970.

Poland, W., & Arns, R. G. Characteristics of successful planning activities. Planning for Higher Education, 1978, 7, 1-6.

Robl, R. M., Karman, T. A., & Boggs, J. H. Quality and vitality through reallocation: a case history. Planning for Higher Education, 1976, 5, n.p.

Salloway, S. E., & Tack, M. W. Comprehensive planning: an organizational approach. Planning for Higher Education, 1978, 7, 1-7.